

# Hendry-Glades SUNDAY NEWS

25 cents

Vol 23 No. 5 HENDRY AND GLADES COUNTIES, FLORIDA SERVING THE SOUTHWESTERN LAKE SHORE AREA SUNDAY, APR. 22, 2018 8 PAGES

## Immigration verification proposal sidelined

APRIL 16, 2018  
By JIM TURNER, NEWS SERVICE OF FLORIDA

Florida businesses won't have to worry about voters requiring them to verify the immigration status of new employees.

The state Constitution Revision Commission on Monday rejected a proposal that would have asked voters in November to require businesses to use a system similar to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Employment Authorization Program, known as E-Verify, to determine immigration-related eligibility of employees.

The proposal, rejected in a 24-12 vote, drew heavy opposition from agriculture, tourism and construction interests.

Commissioner Chris Smith, a former state senator from Fort Lauderdale, pointed to other commission decisions Monday to add eight proposed constitutional amendments to the November ballot and said the employment-verification proposal (Proposal 6010) could be handled instead by the Legislature to see the teeth enough that this should be another paragraph on the ballot," Smith said.

However, Commissioner Rich Newsome, who pushed for the verification system, said Monday the measure would solve a huge problem of undocumented workers "in a way that's not callous."

"We don't have to build a wall to help stop the problem of undocumented workers and of the nightmares that creates, not just for the workers, but the legal workers and the businesses that are trying to follow the law," Newsome said.

Newsome said the proposal would protect undocumented workers who do not have work or legal protections and would help legal workers who face "suppressed wages" because of undocumented immigrants who are willing to take less money. He also said the proposal "polls off the charts."

"This is going to fix something for the good of a lot of people on both sides of the legal line," Newsome said.

Newsome argued powerful special interests tied to agriculture and construction have kept the Legislature from advancing similar proposals in the past.

The vote was applauded by the Florida Chamber of Commerce.

"Proposal 6010 would have placed an ineffective federal government system into Florida's foundational document," Chamber Vice President of Governmental Affairs Frank Walker said in a statement after the vote.

E-Verify has been an issue in Florida for more than a decade, drawing heightened attention as jobs grew scarce during the recession that started in 2007.

Seeking to crack down on the use of undocumented workers, Gov. Rick Scott called as part of his 2010 campaign platform for requiring all businesses in Florida to use E-Verify.

After pushback from business groups supporting the agriculture industry, Scott eventually signed an executive order shortly after taking office in 2011 that required state agencies under his direction to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees by using E-Verify.

## School protection

SPECIAL TO THE SUNDAY NEWS

LaBELLE, FL (Friday Apr. 20, 2018) — The Board of Education is expected to take up on Tuesday, April 24, the question of launching its version of the state's Aaron Feis Guardian program of school protection against an armed shooter.

The program was established under Florida's new Marjory Stonemason Douglas High School Public Safety Act. Guidelines are listed on page 2. Two public sessions for parents and teachers to ask questions have been conducted at the two high schools (see page 2).

Recent legislation also empowers law enforcement to take action against individuals whose be-

havior may appear to be suspicious or dangerous, and 10 days ago such an individual was identified making casual conversation in the Courthouse. Henry County officers found he possessed weapons, and arrested him. A court appearance yesterday was continued to next week.

The arrest caused some unsettlement in courthouse offices which sometimes are witness to irate exchanges between the public and staff when drivers licenses are impounded or properties are sold at public auction. At the request of constitutional officers, Hendry country made plans to protect its employees by reducing the number of entrances and subjecting all visitors to security officers' scrutiny.



## LaBelle Heritage Museum

LaBelle Heritage Museum's May 3 Program Meeting will be a special presentation of acclaimed Hollywood director Nicholas Ray's flawed 1958 masterpiece "Wind Across The Everglades" starring Christopher Plummer, Burl Ives, and Gypsy Rose Lee and featuring a number of well-known Florida "personalities" including Totch Brown and Corey Osceola at the Felda Community Center, 1100 CR 830, Felda 33930 at 7:00 p.m. "Winds Across The Everglades", originally over four hours of film edited to approximately an hour and a half by its producer Budd Schulberg, hints at what it might have been if its director Nicholas Ray had not let personal problems overshadow his attention to the completion of this film.

Since there is limited seating at the Felda Community Center, advance general admission reservations available at [www.labelleheritagemuseum.org](http://www.labelleheritagemuseum.org) are strongly recommended. The door prize drawing will be made from the printed advance tickets unless the ticket holder has proof on a smart phone of making a reservation. Felda is located between LaBelle and Immokalee on State Road 29, and directions to the Felda Community Center are available through both MapQuest and Google for those unfamiliar with the area.

## Recognized: Trent Brown, a junior at the Collegiate Academy at CHS

April 19, 2018 – LaBelle, FL – The Commissioner of Education, Pam Stewart, recognized outstanding college students during the State Board of Education meeting at LaBelle High School on March 27. One of those students is Trent Brown, a junior at the Collegiate Academy at Clewiston High School.

"Trent Brown epitomizes the characteristics we seek to highlight with the Commissioner's Leadership Award, and it was an honor to recognize him at the March State Board of Education meeting," said Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart. "Despite facing many physical hardships, Trent has excelled academically and serves as a role model to his educators and fellow students. The perseverance he has shown is a great reminder that challenges do not have to limit us. Instead, they can help us discover and develop the gifts we have buried inside."

Trent was born with a rare disease called recessive multiple epiphyseal dysplasia disorder that affects bone and joint development, especially of the long bones.

As a result of this disorder he travels predominantly by wheelchair. Despite the physical challenges he faces, he has focused on excelling academically and has been an honor roll student since kindergarten. In high school he has completed honors and AP classes. Through the Collegiate Academy, he takes college classes full time and is on track to earn his high school diploma and an associate in arts degree from Florida SouthWestern State College simultaneously. His current GPA is a 4.0. He plans to continue his studies either in psychology or law after graduation.

Florida SouthWestern State College is Southwest Florida's largest and one of the most affordable institutions of higher education. Annually serving nearly 22,000 students globally, FSW offers a variety of nationally-ranked career-focused academic programs with two- and four-year degrees, and professional certifications. Students are also active in clubs and programs catered to their interests. FSW debuted its intercollegiate athletics

## Perry remarks on golf course's role

By RAOUL BATALLER

A Martin County newspaper writer interviewed Clewiston City Manager Al Perry recently for an article on the pros and cons of municipal golf courses:

"Al Perry grew up on the Clewiston Golf Course.

"On summer days, Perry's parents would drop him off in the morning and he'd hang out there with most of the other town kids until early afternoon, when someone scrounged up a ride home.

"The golf course was a central part of childhood in the Florida town just south of Lake Okeechobee, according to Perry, a lifelong resident.

"It was a safe haven," Perry said. Plus "it was the only option within an hour drive."

"Perry, 48, now is the city manager, but Clewiston — a landlocked town with six stoplights — hasn't changed much, and the golf course remains critically important to the snowbirds and 7,800 permanent residents,

Perry said.

"Financially, though, the course is a burden.

"Last year, Clewiston spent 10 percent of its general-fund budget on the golf course. The estimated \$908,000 is as much as it spent on its fire department, public-works department and city manager's office combined, according to city budget documents.

"But the golf course brought in just over half that sum, leaving the city with a deficit of \$429,000. And the course consistently loses money: Over the past five years it has operated at a loss of nearly \$2 million.

"It's a tough thing to understand," Perry said. People say, "We could be using that for police officers or code enforcement, but it's hard to incentivize someone to move to Clewiston. Golf keeps the winter residents coming here.

"We have to provide some sort of recreation, and a lot of residents just love the course," Perry added. "It's part of our community."

## Bacterial dangers in the western Caloosahatchee

FORT MYERS - April 12, 2018 - Fecal bacteria levels in Billy's Creek pose an extremely serious public health risk. The enterococci bacteria can cause gastrointestinal illness, infections and rashes.

The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) calls for beach closure when enterococci levels reach a threshold of 71 per 100 milliliters of water (cfu or MPN/100 ml) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) sets its threshold level at a monthly average of 35 with no more than 10 percent of samples exceeding 130. Calusa Waterkeeper has documented levels as high as 4840 cfu/100 ml as recently as March 7. This is 68 times higher than the FDOH threshold level of 71. Since 2001 enterococci levels in Billy's Creek have been above the FDOH threshold of 71 more than 97 percent of the time.

Calusa Waterkeeper notified the Fort Myers City Council, Lee County Commission, FDEP and FDOH last January of this threat after our initial review of government records indicated elevated levels dating back to 2001. Yet the various government agencies have failed to

effectively notify the public of the serious health risk.

The Fort Myers Public Information Officer indicated to WINK News that the Creek is "safe" for recreation. It is not safe for children and others who may wade or swim in the Creek. One, "no swimming" sign over the five-mile length of the Creek is inadequate. Enterococci levels are so high at times that the creek may not be safe for indirect contact that canoeists and kayakers may experience. Billy's Creek is a part of the Great Calusa Blueway designated as a paddling trail by the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB). The VCB lists points of interest on Billy's Creek including Shady Oaks Park and the Billy's Creek Filter Marsh.

The Calusa Waterkeeper will discuss the Billy's Creek contamination at the Fort Myers City Council meeting on Monday, April 16th starting at 4:30 pm in City Hall. Calusa Waterkeeper strongly encourages the public to attend this meeting and voice your concerns. If you cannot attend, please call or write your City Council Member and County Commissioner.

Calusa Waterkeeper calls on state and local officials to:

1. Post adequate public notice, including signage, that indicates all appropriate recreational concerns and risks (swimming, wading, boating) and why.
2. Increase the frequency of sampling per the Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 62-302.530 (minimum 10 samples per month for calculating a geometric mean).
3. Conduct enteric bacteria tracing to determine the source of contamination (human vs. animal) and to guide remediation.
4. Develop a restoration plan with appropriate timelines.

## Swimming beach open at W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District has reopened the swimming beach at W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area on the Caloosahatchee River.

The swimming beach on the Caloosahatchee River near Olga was closed temporarily due to elevated levels of E. coli bacteria. Recent test results indicate that the water quality at the swimming beach meets the safety criteria recommended by the Florida Department of Health and the area is safe for waders and swimmers. The public is welcome to enjoy the beach and many other amenities avail-

able at the recreation area.

"Public safety is always our top priority," said Tammy Cleveland, supervisory park ranger in the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston. "Test results confirm that bacterial levels are no longer elevated and we have been cleared to reopen the swimming beach for the enjoyment of our visitors."

Day use areas, such as the W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area, along Lake Okeechobee and the Okeechobee Waterway provide visitors with the opportunity to fish, picnic, swim, or bike. Facilities such as boat ramps, playgrounds, and picnic shelters provide an excellent setting for a family get together or a day of rest and relaxation. For more information on day use areas on the Okeechobee Waterway, visit: [www.saj.usace.army.mil/DayUseAreas/](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/DayUseAreas/)

For information on the W.P. Franklin Lock and Visitor Center, call 239-694-2582.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the leading provider of recreation on federally-managed lands in the United States and a founding member of the National Water Safety Congress, committed